

Problem

- Spanish Words with original diphthong –ie [je] become monophthong –i [i] between the 13th and 15th centuries.
- Does not happen everywhere. Mostly in diminutive suffix. –iello > -illo
- Also happens in words that look like the suffix and words that belong to both groups.

Examples

Diminutive: casiella > casilla “little house”.

Form of Dim: castiello > castillo “castle”

Both: tortiella > tortilla “little cake”,
“Spanish omelet”

No Change

comienza “he starts”

pierna “leg”

fiesta “party”

Previous Explanations and Cultural Background

Previous Explanations

- Menéndez-Pidal (1950) and Penny (2002) postulate the [e] assimilating to the height of both [i] and [ɛ].
- Menéndez-Pidal also shows the –i forms are older and believes they were used by the upper classes
- Malkiel (1976) believes -ie and –i had always been in variation, but –i came to be associated and used with the prestigious social group.

Similar Change to Malkiel’s Hypothesis

- Penny (2000) shows that the change of f > h > Ø , although phonetically based, is only adopted through social change
- As the power shifted from Burgos to Toledo and later to Valladolid and Madrid (1561) (N > S > N), the new Northern forms replaced the older forms.
- Northerners moved south, following the social and economic power
- Spanish is “simpler” than other Romance languages due to constant dialect mixing and frequent shifts in cultural power centers
- Very rural areas still preserve the older variants

Alfonso the Wise

- King Alfonso X (1221-1284), born in Toledo
- Encouraged learning and knowledge
- Wrote poetry and legal code; funded *Estoria de España*
- Made the legal and cultural language the Castilian Spanish of Toledo (González Jiménez 2004; Lapesa 1980; Sánchez-Prieto Borja 2004)
- Lived to be 63; many successors would die younger (~25-40)

Hypothesis

- Different forms always in variation
- During and After the reign of Alfonso X, the –i forms become associated with prestige and are adopted by Spanish speakers.
- Similar to what would happen slightly later and partially contemporaneously with ‘f’ and ‘h’

Goals and Methods

Goals

- Attempt to illustrate the adoption of the monophthong due to sociolinguistic factors
- Analyze how the development relates in three classes of words over time

Methods

- Selection of Words (Lexemes) based on common cases cited in the Menéndez-Pidal (1950), Penny (2002), and González Ollé (1962).
- Diminutives, Diminutive Shaped Words, Diminutive and Lexical
- Corpus Research in the Corpus Diacrónico del Español by the Real Academia Española
- Record the years and occurrences for Lexeme:
 - must have a definite date
 - include alternate orthographic conventions and capitalization
 - include gender and plural marking; unless the variant has a specific meaning to it

- Lexeme Pairs (Word Types) ranked on Frequency (Low, Medium, High) in comparison to each other
- Occurrences /per year (Word Token/year) Frequency of Growth Ranked 1-5
 - 1 Low
 - 2 Med
 - 3 Med-High
 - 4 High
 - 5 Vibrant
- Stage 3, 4, 5: Common existence**

High Frequency

- 1- below ten occurrences, 5+ years between use
- 2- Below ten, between -5 years
3. at least 1 year of near or at 10, mostly every year
4. Multiple instances above or at 10, mostly every year
5. Mostly all above 15 or more, usually every year

Medium Frequency

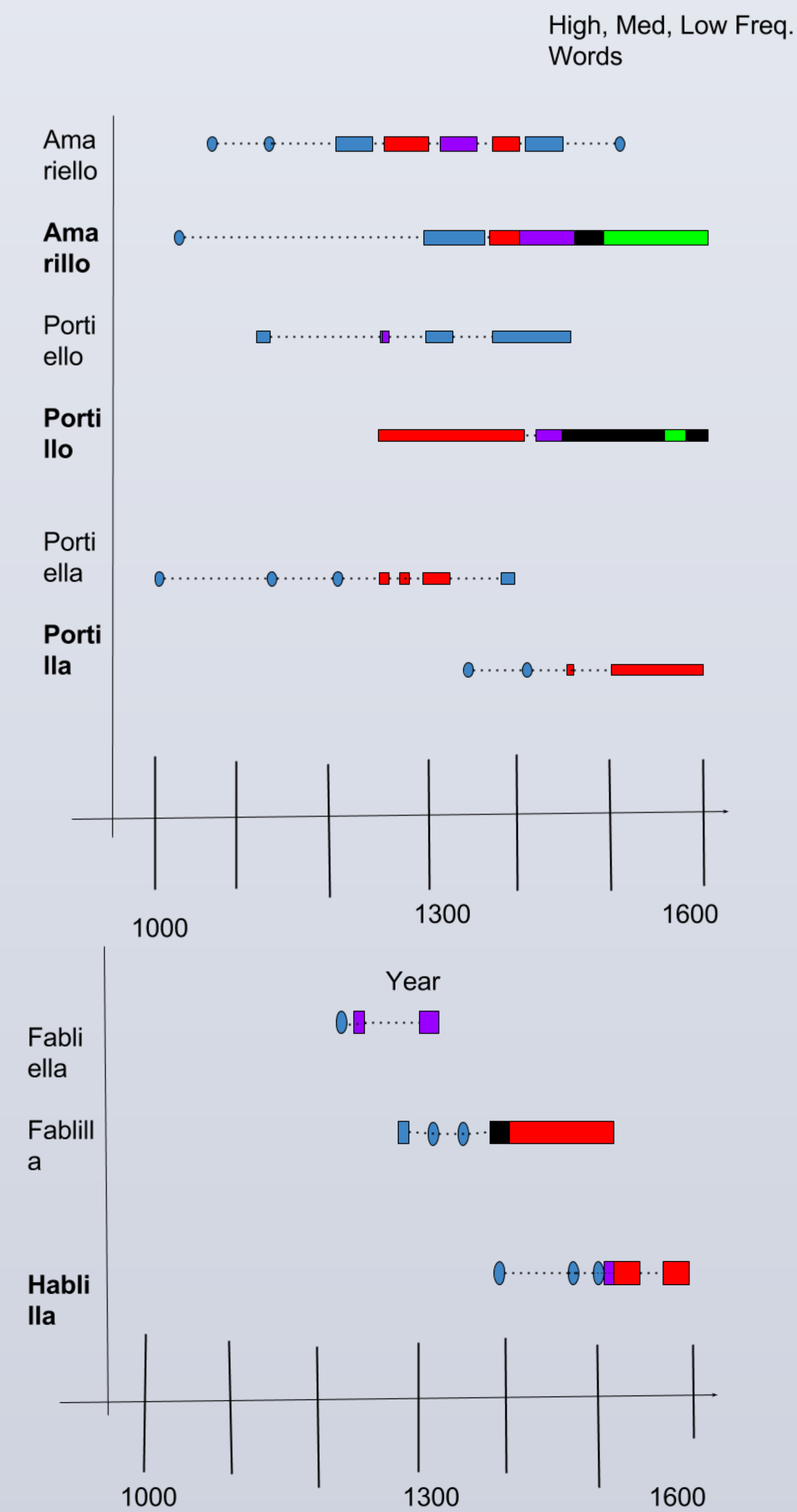
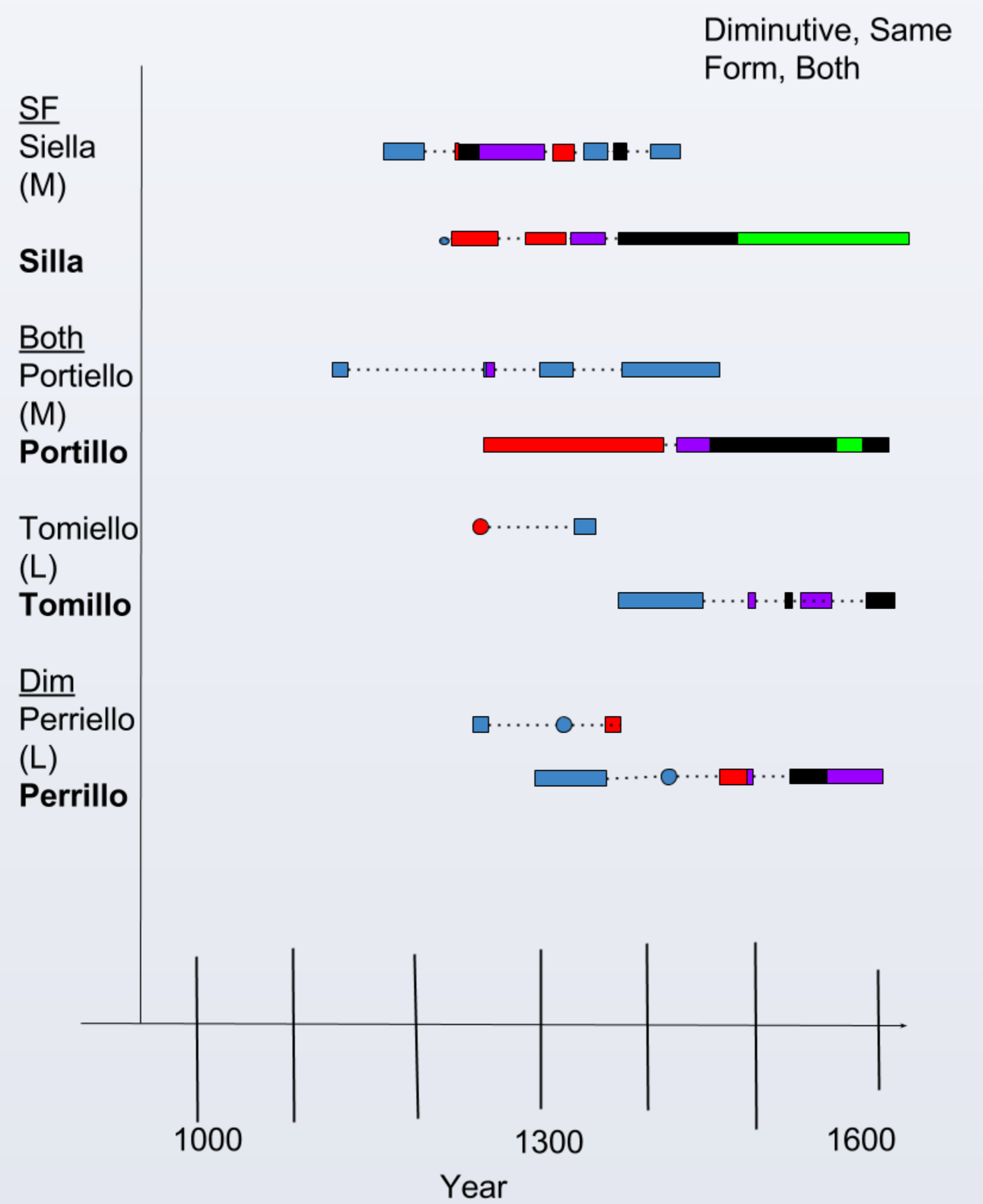
- 1- below 8 occurrences, 5+ years between use
- 2- below 8 occurrences, -5 years between use
- 3- at least 1 year of near or at 8, mostly every year
4. multiple instances above 8, mostly every year
5. mostly above 12 or more, usually every year

Low Frequency

- 1- below 6 occurrences, approx. 5+ years between use
- 2- below 6 occurrences, approx. between -5 years
- 3- at least 1 year of near or at 6, mostly every year
- 4- multiple instances above or at 6, mostly every year
- 5- mostly above 8, usually every year

- Plot Ranges of Ranked Frequency of Growth of Year Occurrences on a timeline

Results



Key for Timelines

Key: Rank 0- Not listed; 1- Blue. 2- Red. 3-Purple. 4- Black. 5-Green. Circle-Single occurrence. Rectangle-Range of occurrences. Existence presumed-
Modern Word

Analysis

- Some –illo forms appear before –iello (not pictured).
- Many –illo forms start to increase in growth near the time of Alfonso X.
- After decreasing from Stage 3, -iello forms rarely increase more in growth
- Reconfirm similar phonological shape, similar change (Bybee 2001)
- The most frequent form (Castiella, not pictured) is the most resistant to being lost; both variants coexist the longest; similar ideas of change expressed in Bybee 2001.
- No written form ‘habliella’ ever exists. Shows that by the time of “h” adoption the –i adoption was already mostly complete.

Importance and Further Directions

Importance

- Similar phonological shape and frequency very important in growth relations
- Relates to lexical strength of an item
- Strong lexical items can still persist for a long time despite writing

Further Directions

- How does meaning of the word in context influence this change?
- How does the change spread on a geographic scale through time?
- How do documents from estimated periods fit in with this change?
- How does this change affect forms of the diminutive with -c-iello?
- What other aspects of the Spanish language have changed due to sociolinguistic influences?

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